

In 1986, the goal should be...looking up, not down!

LOOKING back at 1985 is a particularly negative action. Don't do it, unless you want to remind yourself that human life is pretty cheap in the eyes of the gods or whoever is running the joint.

India took some heavy lumps. First, the mess at Bhopal, where a carbide company took a leak (no pun intended), and thousands were killed or made gravely ill.

Then the mysterious crash of Air India off the coast of Ireland. No survivors. Just ordinary people, going home to visit relatives. Can you imagine the terror as they plunged toward the sea? Screaming, clutching babies. To no avail. The brutal cold of the North Atlantic gave up almost nothing—a few bits of flotsam and jetsam, a few bodies.

And other air crashes, not so spectacular, but just as deadly for those who died. And the ghastly shoot-out at Malta, where nobody seemed to know, or care, whether the rescuers were shooting terrorists or passengers. And the hijacking of an entire cruise ship in the Mediterranean.

But even these events paled when compared to the grotesque tragedy of the earthquakes in Mexico and Colombia. Not only about 40,000 dead, but thousands of others with their lives over-turned, their crops destroyed, their homes lost.

And we worry because the price of

Bill Smiley

Christmas trees has gone up again.

Things haven't been much sweeter at home, even though Canadians live in the best country in the world, and seem to be immune from great disasters, except for the danged winter.

Rancid tuna, tainted buffalo meat (who eats buffalo anyway?), crumbling banks, and a government that can't seem to put one foot in front of the other, without putting the first one in its mouth.

Mr. Mulroney's gang, without his personal public relations facade, makes you start thinking rather longingly for Pierre Trudeau, who at least despised the media and made no attempt to conceal it.

However, we mustn't be morbid. We must look up, not back. I saw a black squirrel yesterday looking up at his home in one of my oaks, and calculating whether he had time to sock away another 500 acorns for the coming months, when all the squirrels do is have sex, sleep, and eat.

And I saw a solid citizen, looking up at the sky and saying, "Jeez, more snow coming."

These are the positive attitudes we must

adopt if we are to emerge next spring, pallid, but survivors. Looking up.

I've painted a rather dark picture of 1985. Forget it, and look up. And if you get some freezing rain in your eyes, don't blame me. Just go to the liquor store and buy some wine with the anti-freeze in it. That'll clear your eyes, though it may not do much for your liver.

Personally, things have gone well with me. I've only been waiting for a hospital bed since Thanksgiving and will probably be tucked in, waiting for some of those unspeakable "tests", by April.

None of my old friends has died recently, and I hope they can say the same for me.

I've lost only one hub-cap this winter trying to get into my garage.

I've pretty well mastered the art—and it is an art—of cooking for one. I sit down at the crack of noon and figure out my menu for the day.

Man does not live by bread alone. He needs peanut butter, as well. While I'm working on my menu, I have bread and peanut butter and a banana. Lots of protein.

Then I write some notes to myself. It's

unhealthy to think about food all the time. Memo: Get that tea-pot, the only one in the house fit for guests, back from Hugh, who "borrowed" it last weekend; call Kim and see if she's still out of a job; stop smoking; stop drinking anything stronger than barley water; get windshield wiper fixed; pay 1983 income tax. And so on. They certainly take my mind off food.

By that time, I'm pretty exhausted, so I have a little "Zizz," or, as the bourgeois call it, "snooze."

This takes a lot of energy out of me, because I dream of not having paid the utilities bill, the phone bill, and the gas bill. I wake up in a nervous sweat.

At this moment, it's time to think about dinner. So I plod through snow to the garage, go downtown, buy a paper, cigarettes and booze, and drop in at the delicatessen where I order a take-out of their delicious hot goulash. That takes care of dinner.

Sometimes I strike it rich. Turkey dinner, wonderful with all fixings, with some old friends. Talked the lady into half an apple pie. Unfortunately, my son came home that weekend. He likes pies.

Mustn't go on like this. 1985 was great, if you're still alive. 1986 is going to be a fine, fine year. That is, if you keep an eye for seagulls.

Ray Baker

"Hi," said the voice. "I'm doing a survey on behalf of Dr. Steven Brown of Sir Wilfrid Laurier University. If you wish to check the authenticity, the telephone number to call is area code, then 555-1221." (You will notice at this point how I craftily inserted a fictitious 555 number, not only to protect the innocent, but to perpetuate the myth that 555, as shown on T.V., really exists). "We are looking for a typical municipal election candidate profile. Can I ask you some questions please?"

"Fire away," I replied. "Provided I get a copy of the report once it's finished. It sounds interesting."

I'm still waiting and it's mid-January 1986.

So on that happy note we started. The voice asked if my father could be classified as active, passive, or whatever. We established whatever and moved to Mom.

This was followed in quick succession by a series of yes/no questions, education up to and including university, age, between 18-25 etcetera through to 50 or over. Sex (hopefully, he could establish that by vocal characteristics and name, but just to be certain, I told him). Marital status, number of children, etcetera. Plus job title and description, and that about wrapped it up, apart from my asking for a separate listing of winning profiles. More about the winning profile later. What intrigued me about the interview was what he **didn't** ask.

He did **not** ask if I was a member now, or had I ever been a member, etcetera? Did I believe in the overthrow of the Crown, the provinces, federal government? Or my views on capital punishment, AIDS, abortion, or nuclear disarmament; the good ship Greenpeace, organ donors or extra-municipal activities.

The subject of whether my car ran on regular or unleaded gas was a typical non-issue and the subject of acid rain was not on the agenda either.

Luckily movies were not touched upon, like Bruce Lee to Chuck Norris and Arnold Schwarzenegger to Rambo. Not even a quick reference to "Make my day" Eastwood. I was all geared up, ready for him, being an avid supporter of the Pen Theatre.

We had no in-depth conversation on the Planning Act (as amended 1982) or even **before** it was amended.

Not even a passing reference to the Municipal Act, or more to the point, the Municipal Election Act amended last week even as we talked.

I was waiting to tell him that re-elect, as opposed to elect, was worth around 15 per cent at the polls, but statistics never reared its head.

The other side of the coin meant that Baker has a 10 per cent loss because its top of an alphabetic list, that the average voter skips to the middle of the list, ignoring the poor old Ables, Alvis and Zobowski's and zeroing straight onto the Lewis, Levis and Loftus candidates.

When I get "Yer typical winning candidate" profile from the good doctor I'll publish it in the national interest. Then, next time around, any of Gentle Readers can become an "instant" alderman or councillor just by being typically typical of a winning profile.

Here's what you do:

The media will always get to you, and ask for a 200 to 300 word resume or self description, or platform.

Now's your chance!

A quick name change puts you dead in the middle of the alphabet. Your sex, age group, marital status, are straight from the profile. You can't

lose so far. You came from a long line of (quote the profile). You have strong and definite stands on all kinds of issues from acid rain to saving the Canadian banking system (that's OK, I didn't get asked, neither will you).

The only word of caution is, mind how you answer the bit about children. The official answer would look strange. It's 2.3.

This week's quote: "I call this loose leaf book my 'Bible'. It contains details on all the feet in the national ballet. I have five pages devoted just to Karen Kain's instep". The lady who looks after the shoes for the Canadian National Ballet Company.

Ray Baker and his family live in Penetanguishene. He is a free-lance writer whose closing quotes have nothing whatever to do with the story line.

Break in weather sees planes

They got in plenty of flying over the weekend at Huronia Airport before the weather closed in.

Aircraft of various sizes and shapes took advantage of the weather most of Saturday and Sunday.

Even a ski-equipped aircraft made use of the tri-municipal facility in Tiny Township, reports John O'Hara, airport manager.

Tracking Halley's Comet

If skies are clear tonight, you should be able to spot Halley's Comet in the west-southwest skies between 6:15 and 7:30 p.m.

Stargazers should use binoculars in tracking the comet which will be found just above Jupiter, the brightest star in the western skies.

Freezing rain makes driving tricky

Freezing rain in North Simcoe late Sunday afternoon and evening caused driving at times to be a bit tricky in the Heart of Huronia.

Initially rain had been called for last week but northerly arctic winds kept the wet weather from showing up until Sunday.

Busy

Last month Midland police investigated a total of 45 motor-vehicle accidents in town: 23 of them were of a reportable nature while the other 22 were non-reportable.

And during the same period, police laid 21 charges under the Criminal Code of Canada, one under the Narcotics Control Act, three under the Liquor Licence Act and 44 under the Highway Traffic Act.

In December a total of 25 speeders were nabbed by radar while 347 tickets were handed out for parking violations in the municipality.

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Special labour charge to make Russian, Balloons or Romans shades is \$7.99 sq. ft. Reg. price is \$11.95 sq. ft.

You'll save 25% on the cost of fabrics...labour and installation are extra.

Save 35%
On Custom Vertical Blinds or Custom Venetian Blinds

Verticals come complete with heavy aluminum track, weights and chains...with or without valance.

Choose from a great assortment of fabrics, aluminum or vinyl vanes in a super colour range. Venetians are easy to clean and come with 1" aluminum slats, valance included.

Installation is extra but measuring is free.

Save 20% to 40%
On Wall to Wall Broadloom Carpet

For this sale we have reduced a super selection of carpets from the best mills in Canada. This grouping includes level loops, cut and loops, velvet or plush, saxony and twists. The fibres include nylon, acrylic, polyester and wool.

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Installation is extra and is done by our man, who has worked with us for 10 years. Estimating and measuring is free.

Check our White Sale Specials - Towels, etc.

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